



Grow your own herb garden

Herbs boost food as well as nature.

Useful in the kitchen and in the garden, herbs are a great plant to grow. But what exactly is a herb? Herbs are named after herbaceous plants, a group that has soft, green stems rather than woody ones. However, most people now class a herb as any plant that can be used for food, flavouring or medicine. Popular herbs include rosemary, which is often used to flavour roast meats and vegetables; basil, which gets added to Italian dishes such as pizza and pasta; and coriander, which is used to flavour lots of Asian dishes. Herbal remedies include mint to help with digestive issues and lavender as an aid to sleep. You can plant herbs as seeds or buy potted herb plants from a garden centre or supermarket.



Choose your herbs

Ask yourself, what herbs do you like, where are you planting them and why? Will they be in a flowerbed outside or a pot inside on a windowsill? Some herbs, such as basil, need to be inside unless they're in a very sheltered, warm spot. Others, like sage, are hardy and can be outside all year. Some herbs are good at attracting pollinators as well as flavouring food. Chives' round purple flowers attract lots of buzzing bees.

Prepare your pot or area

Most herbs need quite a bit of warmth and sunlight, so choose a spot that's sheltered and not too shady. If you're planting herbs in a bed or a few in one pot, make sure there's enough space for them to grow – about a hand's width between each one. Plants usually have labels telling you what they need, or you can ask an adult for help. All containers must have holes in the bottom so water can drain out.



Plant your herbs

Seeds should start out in a pot inside. Fill most of the pot with compost, add the seeds and cover with a thin layer of compost. To remove a plant from its original pot, turn it upside down, tap the bottom, grasp the plant and pull it out gently. In a bed, use a trowel to dig a hole and add your plant. For a pot, fill it with compost until your plant sits at the right level. Then fill the compost around it so the plant sits securely.

Mark and maintain

Make some waterproof markers so you can identify your herbs. You can write names on lolly sticks or pebbles to stick in the soil. Water your herbs after planting and keep them watered according to the instructions on the plant or seed packet. Take care when harvesting your herbs because each type is different. Chives can be cut from the bottom but basil should be harvested from the top.



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